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ABSTRACT

This paper seeks to define the program title "Basic Skills in Bilingual Education: Grammar and Pronunciation." The author considers the terms separately. Grammar and pronunciation should perhaps be defined as aural-oral skills to better specify what is involved. Various definitions of bilingual education are discussed, as are the linguistic and sociolinguistic factors that should be considered in a typology of bilingual education. The idea of basic skills in bilingual education programs cannot be limited to language. The output as well as the input of such programs must be seen in terms of concept as well as of language development. Linguistic, sociolinguistic, and educational factors must all be taken into consideration when defining bilingual education. (VM)

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AURAL-ORAL SKILLS AND DIFFERENT MODELS OF BILINGUAL EDUCATION

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The program title "Basic Skills in Bilingual Education: Grammar and Pronunciation" constitutes quite a mouthful for one to master. Let us use the language teaching technique of "backward build-up" in an effort to clarify and correct the difficulties encountered in its elements.

Grammar and Pronunciation

"Grammar and pronunciation" are difficult to enunciate, much less explicate, when faced with modern linguistic theoreticians and practicioners. First of all, both terms are rarely heard from such sources, having given way to "syntax" and "phonology." More importantly, linguists deemphasize the separation of syntax and phonology from each other and from the semantic component of linguistic competence. Wardhaugh (1970b), for example, stated that "phonology and syntax appear today to be inseparably fused and not to be discrete levels of linguistic organization [p. 67]." Finally, it would appear that we have as yet attained only a limited knowledge of these three basic linguistic components (Cooper, 1970). MacNamara (1971) pointed out that "the obscurities of phonology and syntax are acclaimed in every book and paper one reads on these subjects [p. 2]."

Given these limitations, one could speak about the finite number of rules constituting syntax (Chomsky, 1965); argue for a deductive or an inductive approach to teaching these rules (Campbell, 1970; MacNamara, 1971); and examine the useful taxonomy of teaching grammar according to horizontal, vertical, and serial dimensions (Light, 1968). Moreover, one could describe the pattern practice approach, giving the example of a specialized set of materials for young Spanish-speaking students (Barker, 1968). However, others have already done so quite effectively and one need only refer to

them for further information.

Similarly, one could specify relevant methods and materials for teaching phonology. Following the same example of young Spanish-speaking students, one might thus describe the use of minimal contrast and mimicry drills, puppetry, music, and projective painting in the teaching of English phonology (Koenig, 1953; Wardhaugh, 1970b). One might also develop a contrastive analysis to predict points of interference between the native and target languages, using the sound systems of Spanish and English as an example (Lado, 1956; Olguin, 1971).* However, others have already pointed out the limited predictive value of contrastive analysis (Cooper, 1970; Denison, 1966; Wardhaugh, 1970a). For example, in a phonemic analysis of the difficulties encountered by Spanish-speaking youngsters in learning English, Jameson (1967) found that the English vowel sounds that were new to their linguistic repertoire caused them much less difficulty than expected.

Thus, the difficulty with the terms "grammar and pronunciation" lies in their supposed specificity. The danger of a detailed discussion of each of these topics rests in the possibility of losing one's perspective. In contrast, a wider view reveals the linked nature of these elements and our limited knowledge about them. The more general linguistic area covered by the term "aural-oral skills" would be more appropriate. Moreover, a wider view reveals that interference phenomena in second language acquisition go beyond the linguistic domain to intimately involve psycho-

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*Contrastive studies concerning the syntax and semantics of Spanish-speaking students have also been done (e.g., Cornejo, 1969; Peña, 1967; Young, 1971).

logical, cultural, and educational interference as well (Saville, 1971).

Bilingual Education

The difficulty in describing and discussing "bilingual education" is just the opposite. Rather than being too narrow, it is far too broad. Whereas from an ESL approach, language proficiency was always regarded as a one-sided affair. The renaissance of the bilingual approach in the United States revealed the complexity of what Bordie (1970, p. 817) termed the "dual matrix situation" of bilingual students. The two-way dimensions of this situation are reflected in the current useage of such terms as "bicognitive," "bicentric," "bicultural," and "biliterate" as well as "bilingual" (Krear, 1971).

The variations of bilingualism are, as Thonis (1971, p.3) pointed out, "endless." "Like matrimony," she continued, "it may be for better or for worse, for richer or for poorer but it may be hazardous to predict the outcome at best unless the concomitant conditions are known [p. 4]."

The varieties of bilingual education, too, are seemingly endless. Whether it amounts to a "synergic situation" (Flores, 1969, p. 67) or a "double disaster" (Horner, 1969, p. 3) depends on several important questions. For example, Valencia (1969, p.2) asked: "for whom" and "based on what objectives." Gaarder (1969, p. 32) added: "how," "to what extent," and "under what conditions."

Consequently, Valencia (1969) and Gaarder (1967) developed schematic representations to distinguish various linguistic models of bilingual education. The principal distinguishing feature they used was the distribution of instructional time in each language. Mackey (1969) and Fishman and Lovas (1970) extended the differentiation of models of bilingual education to include the sociolinguistic context. Mackey's

typology thus distinguished some 250 models of bilingual education. Fishman and Lovas pointed out that communities vary from a situation of language shift to one of language maintenance just as bilingual programs range in their objectives from transitional to full bilingualism.* They emphasized the need for sociolinguistic surveys of the target community to optimize the correspondence between the linguistic directions of the home and the school. Zirkel's survey (1972) of the Spanish-speaking community of Hartford serves as an example.

Krear (1971) synthesized the foregoing linguistic and sociolinguistic typologies into four basic models for developing pre-reading skills within a bilingual education context. Although all of these models include the teaching of aural-oral skills in both languages, the relative time distribution for each language varies according to the linguistic directions of the curriculum and the community. Thus, for example, a transfer program in a transfer community provides a heavy emphasis on ESL (estimated to be 75 per cent from the start) whereas a maintenance program in a maintenance community provides smaller steps in ESL instruction (estimated to be 50 per cent by the end). Moreover, the development of pre-reading skills varies accordingly. Thus, a transfer program in a transfer community provides extended readiness instruction in English and delayed initial reading instruction in English, whereas a maintenance program in a maintenance community provides initial readiness and reading instruction in the native language.

Thus, the various types of bilingual programs and communities have been identified and interrelated in clear-cut categories according to the successive vantage points of linguists and sociolinguists.

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*Despite objectives to the contrary, many present bilingual programs in the United States tend to be transitional in effect (Christian, 1971; Muckley, 1971; Simpson, 1971).

However, the view is yet to be widened to focus not only on "bilingual" but also on "education." Horner's (1971) comments concerning a current resource book on the topic are strikingly apropos:

> Yet it becomes apparent that their strong foreign language orientation imposes a restrictive definition upon bilingual education, suggesting that language, rather than education, is the heart of the matter. The FL (and ESL) bias which flavors the work throughout robs it, to some extent, of the sociological, economic, and political, as well as educational, issues which form a part of the complex history and contemporary reality out of which this experiment called bilingual education grows [p. 153].

The effects of this wider matrix of factors on the teaching/learning situation can be seen -- and must be seen -- in the application of the bilingual approach to the education of various groups of students. Bilingual approaches which have proved educationally as well as linguistically effective with one group of students may be contraproductive for another. For example, Lambert (1970,1971) described a successful model of bilingual education for English-speaking students in Canada. In this experiment of "home-school language switch," Canadian children whose native language was English received all of their initial instruction in French. As a result they made significant gains in second language acquisition without suffering any retardation in mental ability, academic achievement, or native language development. Yet, this successful experiment in bilingual education for English-speaking children in Canada is strikingly similar in form to the failure-fraught treatment by which the Spanish-speaking student has traditionally been taught in the United States, and to which bilingual education is seen as an alternative.* The

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*One must not infer from this statement that Lambert was ignorant of the large differences in circumstances. On the contrary, he explicitly stated in an earlier study of the same program that the education of Spanish-speaking students in the United States is "not a valid parallel" (Lambert, et al., 1970).

difference goes beyond language to the underlying and intertwining social, economic, political, and cultural barriers faced by the Spanish-speaking in the United States.

Basic Skills

The "basic skills" in bilingual education programs similarly cannot be limited to language. The output as well as the input of such programs must be seen in terms of concept as well as language development. The relationship between the language and thought processes is still largely unknown (Vygotsky, 1962). The complexity is all the more when two languages are involved. As Thonis (1971) pointed out,

> Children who are learning two languages as well as using two languages in order to learn are engaged in a highly complex process, one which influences their cognitive power, their emotional development and their personality structure. The challenge to educators of young children lies in the preparation of an educational plan which will guide them safely through the dual language process so that they are competent, knowledgeable and comfortable in two languages and environments.

The basic skills needed by these students thus involve academic as well as linguistic progress. Linguistic achievement is a necessary but not sufficient condition of present bilingual programs. Subject matter achievement is also mandated; for the rationale for such programs, as reflected in the funding requirements of Titles VII and I(ESEA), is one of compensatory education as well as language instruction.

Thus, one must be aware and beware of the linguistic myopia reflected in titles such as "Basic Skills in Bilingual Education: Grammar and Pronunciation" (despite the apparent effectiveness of backward build-up). The successively wider angles of the linguistic, sociolinguistic, and educational lenses allow one to see the complex matrix of factors which extend beyond as well as within the bilingual classroom.

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